

First meeting of the 2009/2010 Bureau
Washington, D.C., 15-16 October 2009

Item 3g of the Provisional
Agenda

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF UNECE/UNODC
TASK FORCE ON CRIME CLASSIFICATION**

Note prepared by the UNECE secretariat

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Joint UNECE/UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Meeting on Crime Statistics (21-23 October 2008, Vienna) made a proposal to carry out work under the framework of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) within the field of crime classifications to be used for statistical purposes at the international level.
2. The Meeting noted that the European Commission is developing a European crime classification system for statistical purposes. Furthermore, an expert group organized by the United Nations Statistical Division in September 2008 discussed possible development of a crime classification system at a global level. The Meeting observed that any classification system at EU level and other cross-national initiatives should link to the wider global data collection.
3. Participants highlighted that an international crime classification would be useful but its development faced a number of significant challenges. Any classification for statistical purposes could not easily be imposed for use at local level and would not necessarily solve difficulties of cross-national comparability. Rather, in addition to a national legal classification system, a parallel, behavioural/event based classification – based on but not restricted by legal definitions - would be useful for grouping data for statistical purposes at the international level.
4. Participants proposed to establish a task force under the CES to work on a crime classification. The Meeting asked UNODC and UNECE to prepare draft terms of reference for the task force.
5. The June 2009 CES plenary session agreed that work should be carried out on developing a crime classification and requested the CES Bureau and the secretariat to undertake the necessary actions.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE TASK FORCE

3. The main objectives of the Task Force are:

(a) Developing a set of principles on international crime classification systems for statistical use, in particular to improve consistency and international comparability of crime statistics;

(b) Undertaking a case study of defining and classifying selected offences;

(c) Collaborating with the European Commission (DG-JLS and Eurostat) on the development of an EU level classification.

III. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

4. The main outputs of the Task Force will be:

(a) A set of principles on international crime classification systems for statistical use; and

(b) A case study of selected offences.

IV. TIME FRAME

5. The work of the Task Force should be completed by the end of 2010 and be presented at the Joint UNECE/UNODC Meeting on Crime Statistics tentatively scheduled for Spring 2011.

V. COMPOSITION OF THE TASK FORCE

6. Representatives of Canada (subject to confirmation), Estonia, Finland, Italy, Latvia (subject to confirmation), the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States of America (subject to confirmation) and Eurostat expressed interest in participating in the Task Force at the October 2008 UNECE/UNODC Meeting on Crime Statistics.

VI. SYSTEM OF WORK AND POSSIBLE MEETINGS

7. The members of the Task Force are expected to agree on a division of labour and to work mainly via e-mail. No formal meetings of the Task Force have been planned. However, informal meetings could be possibly organised back-to-back to events in which the majority of Task Force members are expected to participate.

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